

TPs: News conference on Emergencies Act declaration, Wednesday, February 16th

Good afternoon.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am speaking to you on the traditional territory of the Algonquin People.

I want to provide a brief update to Canadians on where we are in the process of implementing the Public Order Emergency declared under the Emergencies Act.

The reason why our government took this action is clear to anyone walking the streets of downtown Ottawa, or who has tried to cross the Canada-US border in multiple provinces.

We are dealing with unprecedented and illegal blockades and occupations.

As I said on Monday, Canada is a rule-of-law country, and by making this declaration, we are following the law and acting within it.

The Emergencies Act spells out a clear process that must be followed once an emergency is declared.

Yesterday, the orders and regulations that allow us to take action were published in the Canada Gazette.

They outline in specific terms our clear, targeted and proportionate response to this crisis.

As the Emergencies Act stipulates, the orders and regulations made yesterday must be tabled in the House of Commons within two days of their release. That will happen before the end of the day tomorrow.

Looking ahead, both the House of Commons and Senate will soon have the opportunity to debate and vote on the emergency declaration.

We are required to table the written declaration in both Houses within seven sitting days.

As well, Parliament can amend or revoke any orders we have made. This is an important democratic check and balance in the Act.

We will be moving quickly to commence debate, Canadians expect nothing less.

The declaration and all resulting orders and regulations, are temporary. The powers granted in these regulations will expire after 30 days, and we hope to revoke them even sooner.

Our government understands there is anxiety among many Canadians about how their rights may be affected by this action.

I understand that concern. But I want to reassure you.

**The Emergencies Act is not the old War Measures Act.
The Emergencies Act is much more limited in scope.**

It is allowing us to use targeted and proportional measures to help bring the illegal blockades and occupations to an end.

And critically, all of our actions under the Emergencies Act will comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That requirement is built into the legislation itself. It is an important and necessary safeguard.

Canadians expect their government to act within the bounds of the Charter, and we will live up to that expectation.

Thank you. I'll turn the microphone over to Minister Mendicino.